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The Challengers



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From the Commander

By Major Jack Wayman

Dear Families, I know of your sacrifice, and I am honored to command your soldiers. I have seen your soldiers in action. They function well as a team, and they are well led and cared for by their sergeants and officers.

We will ensure your soldiers have the ability and time to email, call, and write. For various reasons, they probably won't be able to call or email for the first 3 weeks after we arrive. We will arrive, get our equipment and supplies ready, do some more training, and drive to our mission location. At the right time, we will give you our APO mailing address.

We will communicate with you as much as possible; however, information will be filtered for accuracy and safety-for your sake and ours. We will be publishing a unit newsletter with human-interest stories and pictures when we go overseas. We will publish these electronically and distribute to your FRG leader. I will also continue writing articles for your FRG newsletter.

We have already sent our lead element to prepare the way for the rest of us. By the time you receive this newsletter, the rest of us may have already departed. We will provide timely and accurate information to the FRG Leader through the Rear Detachment Commander. Please avoid speculation and specific information.

Please stay in touch with your soldier and each other. If you have concerns, please use your telephone tree. Most questions can be answered easily. Harder questions will need to be forwarded. Your telephone tree callers always have access to your FRG Leader, and she always has access to me through the Rear Detachment Commander. I honor you, and my thoughts and prayers are with you.

Sincerely,
Jack A. Wayman, Jr., Major, US Army, Commanding



What information indicates you or your soldier's vulnerabilities?

Criminals seek and use this information

Operational Security

by Major Jack Wayman

How can a criminal get the most for the least trouble and danger to themselves? What information indicates how vulnerable you are? Are you an easy target?

These are questions cowardly criminals ask themselves. These are also the questions our adversaries ask themselves, and they actively seek answers to these questions. In fact, some adversaries make themselves experts at this. To you and me, some information might not be of any use, but we have a thinking enemy intent on doing us in as a nation.

They proved on September 11, 2001, that they are capable and willing to use everyday things to do horrendous harm. That is why it is so important to keep Operational Security in mind whenever you talk about what is happening with your soldier or their unit.

Avoid speculation and specific details

Speak in general terms about your personal experience

Dangerous Information

By Major Jack Wayman

What are the two types of information that make your soldier vulnerable? "Speculation" and "Specific".

Speculation leads to rumors that can damage lives and reputations, and destroys the ability of soldier and team to scan, focus, and act in dangerous environments. Speculation is one of the most effective tools enemies use on the minds of our soldiers. You can avoid speculation by speaking of your own personal experience. Let others speak of their experiences.

Enemies get information from personal email

Don't give specific unit name, mission, location, activities, or dates

Specific information is essential for operations, but it is deadly for operational security. Enemies actively collect information from personal email and conversations, and from public media. They skillfully put innocent details together to create information they can use to kill our soldiers and make units fail. People almost have to have a criminal mind even to imagine the things an enemy can do with specific information.

You can avoid giving away specific information by speaking in general terms. Remember, in these operations, it is classified information for any two of the following to be used together: a unit's name, location, activity, or dates. So you can see how important it is not to talk in specifics at all. Anyone can piece together the information to come up with classified information that could endanger our soldiers' lives or mission.



*Caution your
soldier against
giving you too
much information*

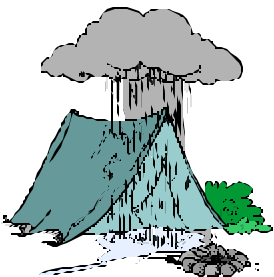
*Wait for official
information from
the Commander*

Dangerous Information—continued

One last note of caution. When specific information is allowed to be released, the Commander will officially release it. If your soldier tries to give you specific information before it is officially released, it is probably because people like to be the first to share news.

However, soldiers should remember that in addition to risking soldiers' lives and missions, it is a Federal crime to release classified information without proper clearance. Soldiers from other units have been charged, and may spend several years in prison because they compromised classified information.

Your soldier may be tempted to give you specific information without proper authorization—don't let them do it. Speak in general terms, and wait for official information from the Commander through the command channels. And be patient; things change so often—even official information can change.



We made it.

*The team made it
together*

*Soldiers keep
going when they
know they can and
must*

Holy Popsicles, Batman!

By Major Jack Wayman

It has been said, "Hardship endured together makes a stronger team." This is true. Most of our training in the field was cold and wet. Some of it was wetter and colder than many of us were mentally prepared for. On two particular days, it was "wickedly" cold. Being out in it all day was bad enough, and the wind made it worse by stealing from us what little warmth we could generate. But we made it. The team made it together. And that's exactly how we are going to make it through this deployment—as a team.

It has also been said that suffering without purpose destroys the spirit. Although this is true, we observed the other side of the coin. In fact, our trainers commented that our team is one of the unique ones that never quit. Many quit at the first sign of danger or defeat, but we knew war brings chaos, we trusted each other, and we conditioned ourselves mentally, physically, and emotionally as individuals and as a team. As we progress through additional briefings and training events, we will condition ourselves even more. We will constantly be challenged to expect the unexpected, and to adapt and overcome as individuals and a team. We are soldiers.

Coping Strategies The 4 M's

MAINTAIN

- Stay in good physical condition
- Eat Balanced meals and get plenty of sleep
- Keep in touch with positive people
- Avoid things that make you feel worse
- Avoid spending sprees, but treat yourself to a special outing

MANAGE

- Manage your life—set goals
- Start a project that you've put off. Go back to school or begin a self-help program.
- Take time away from the children so you can take care of yourself.
- Travel-new scenery and a change of pace can do wonders for the spirit.
- Become a volunteer
- Know your limits.

MONITOR

- Be aware of early signs of stress.
- Don't lose your sense of humor.
- Ask for help if you need it.

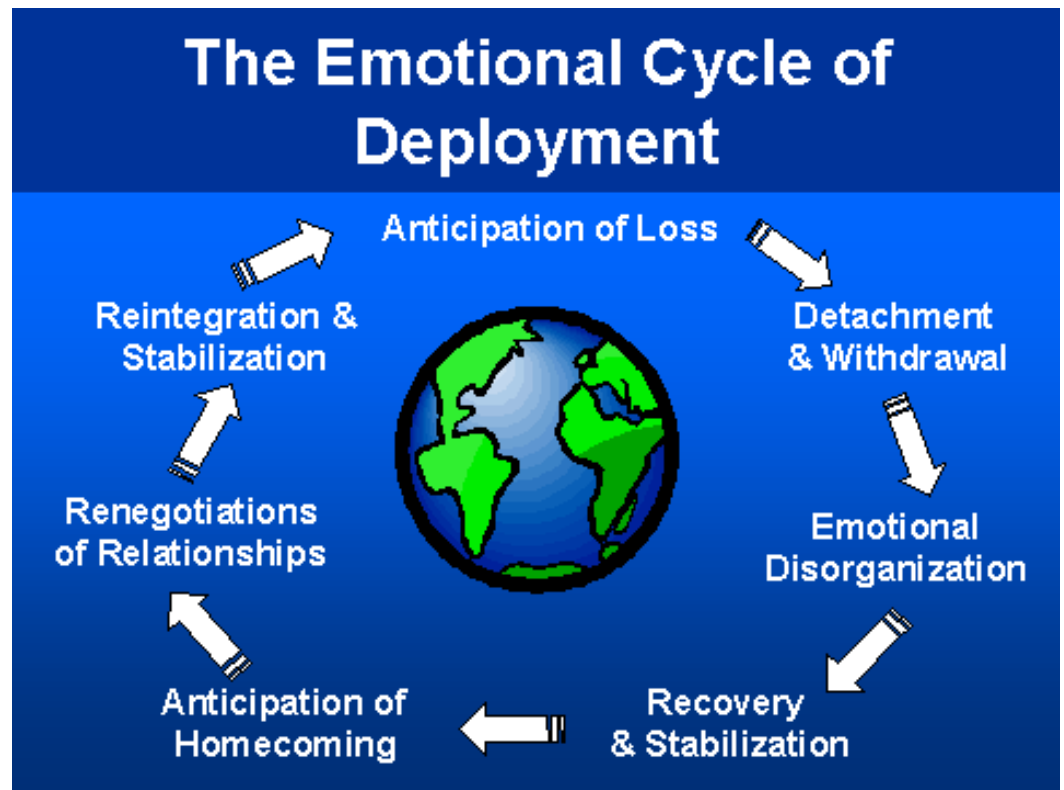
MANEUVER

- Relieve stress-try relaxation exercises
- Use coping strategies that work for you.
- Stop and smell the roses.

Emotional Cycle of Deployment

The following chart describes the seven distinct emotional stages that occur during deployment.

You may find hope and reassurance in this model and the suggested coping strategies, with the knowledge that many others share your responses to this challenging experience.



Phase	Stage	Time Frame
Pre-Deployment	Anticipation of Loss	1-6 weeks before departure
	Detachment & Withdrawal	Last week before departure
During Deployment	Emotional Disorganization	First 6 weeks of deployment
	Recovery & Stabilization	Variable duration
	Anticipation of Homecoming	Last 6 weeks of deployment
Post-Deployment	Renegotiation of Relationship	First 6 weeks home
	Reintegration & Stabilization	Variable (6 to 12 weeks)

*Adapted from the Deployment Cycle of Deployment by Kathleen Vestal Logan

Stress Busters

- Positive thinking
- Refocus the negative to be positive
- Plan some fun
- Talk positively to yourself
- Make an effort to stop negative thoughts
- Eat foods for improved health and well-being
- Eat appropriate amounts of food at a reasonable schedule
- Make an effort to interact socially with people
- Reach out to others
- Nurture yourself and others
- Use relaxation techniques
- Take time for personal interests and hobbies
- Start a specific program of physical activity
- Go for a walk
- Listen to music

Emotional Cycle During Deployment

Anticipation of Loss

Common Reactions

- fluctuations in energy levels and mood
- feelings of sadness, excitement, restlessness, anxiety, tension, anger, frustration, resentment, depression

General Coping Suggestions

- allow yourself to feel and express all emotional responses
- encourage all family members to share their feelings
- involve the whole family in preparing for the separation
- complete the Pre-deployment Checklist with your spouse
- participate in pre-deployment briefings and activities
- create opportunities for warm lasting memories, take pictures
- set realistic goals for yourself for the deployment period

Detachment and Withdrawal

Common Reactions

- reduced emotional and sexual intimacy
- feelings of despair, hopelessness, impatience, numbness

General Coping Strategies

- accept your feelings as normal reactions to challenging circumstances
- communicate as openly and honestly as possible
- be patient with yourself and other family members
- complete packing early; keep the last day free for family time
- ignore rumors and rely on official sources of information

Emotional Disorganization

Common Reactions

- Concern that your partner is coping so well you are no longer needed
- Feelings of increased confidence, independence, competence, pride, freedom, isolation, anxiety, depression

General Coping Strategies

- Enjoy new skills, freedom, independence
- Celebrate signs of positive growth in self and other family members
- Offer empathy and support to others
- Maintain regular contact through phone calls, letters, email
- Confide in trusted peers
- Seek professional counseling if feelings of depression/anxiety are threatening to overwhelm

Preventing Loneliness

- **Volunteer**

Be a Sunday school teacher, help with childcare during chapel services, join your FRG. You can even sign up to be a coach.

- **Get a Job**

Pick a job that involves other people. If it's a fun job it's even better because it's true-time flies when you're having fun!

- **Play a Sport**

Baseball and softball, soccer and bowling, tennis and aerobics, and many more. There are also associated opportunities-like a score-keeper, team manager, or team mother/father.

- **Go to School**

Learn to fix your car, become a gourmet cook or nuclear physicist. It's up to you!

- **Join a Family Readiness Group**

Getting together with others that are going through the same thing as you really helps.

- **Teach a Class**

Share what you know with others at the local YWCA, American Red Cross, or the many other places that are looking for good teachers.

There are a lot of things you can do to fill up your time. Once you get up and go, soon you'll wonder where the time went!

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Emotional Cycle During Deployment—continued

Anticipation of Homecoming

Common Reactions

- increased energy and activity
- sleep and appetite disturbances
- feelings of excitement, joy, apprehension, restlessness, impatience, anxiety

General Coping Strategies

- share your feelings of apprehension as well as excitement and joy
- share your expectations and desires for the homecoming
- reassure your partner of your love and commitment
- include your children in planning for the homecoming celebrations
- participate in preparation for reunion activities
- ignore rumors and rely on official sources of information concerning return date, time, and location

Renegotiations of Relationships

Common Reactions

- difficulty re-establishing emotional and sexual intimacy
- feelings of excitement, disorganization, resentment, frustration
- grieving loss of freedom and independence

General Coping Strategies

- communicate as openly and honestly as possible; accept your feelings as normal and not a threat to your relationship
- try to be patient with yourself, partner and children
- renegotiate household roles and responsibilities to share the workload
- celebrate together the personal growth each has achieved
- continue to participate in a support group/network
- seek professional counseling, contact your doctor, chaplain or social worker for assistance in coping with stress

Reintegration and Stabilization

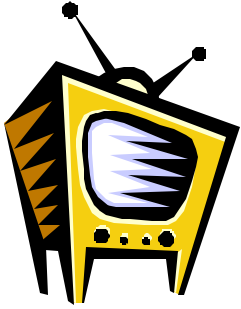
Common Reactions

- feelings of intimacy, closeness, confidence in relationship

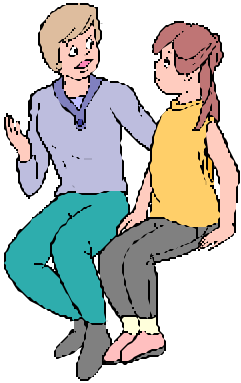
General Coping Strategies

- remember to follow through on promises made during deployment
- relax and enjoy yourself and your family
- share what you have learned with other families

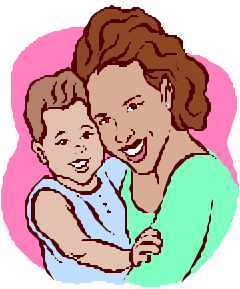
identify what worked well in your planning and what could be improved for the next deployment



Be aware of what children see or hear on TV and radio



Talk to children about their feelings



Comfort children by holding and hugging them

Media Exposure While a Parent is Away

During times of military conflict, news reports and images may be confusing or frightening to children.

Limit television watching:

- Be aware of what your children see and hear on television and radio.
- Watch TV with your children and talk with them about what they see.
- Help children sort out what they see and hear. Let them know it is okay to talk about these issues with you.
- Limit television watching just before bedtime.
- Remind your children that news reports often stress the most negative aspects of a military situation.

Realize that young children don't understand military conflicts the same way as adults:

- Find out what your children know and talk to them about their feelings.
- Answer their questions honestly, using words they can understand. Don't try to give your children all the information.
- Follow your children's lead. Answer questions as they are asked and watch how they respond before deciding what to say next.

Know what to do when your children are scared about something they see or hear:

- When children see or hear something scary or disturbing, they may start to worry about their own safety.
- Reassure your children that their family and home are safe.
- Offer your children comfort. Hug and hold them, especially those who have nightmares or trouble sleeping.
- Remind them about all the adults (friends, teachers, other relatives, child care providers) who are there to keep them safe.



The best way to serve our loved ones while they are away is to serve each other.

Contact your FRG Leader for more information.

Join the Challenger Team!

We are the Family Readiness Group, otherwise known as the FRG. We are here to augment the support systems that are already in place through the Army. FRG members are provided with information, assistance, referrals, connections, and a sense of community in areas unique to military separation.

The FRG interests are:

- (1) Self-reliant families, aware of their benefits, how to access them, how to gain information to solve problems, and able to cope with periods of military separation,
- (2) Open communication network between soldiers, family members, and the chain of command, and
- (3) Family awareness of the unit's mission and activities.

Please consider where you would like to serve as a volunteer. We must stick together while our loved ones are away. The best way to serve them is to serve each other. If you are interested in joining this worthwhile group, or would like more information, please call (877) 620-4187 or email m158.frgleader@us.army.mil.

Need answers? Get in the Tree!

The telephone tree, that is. The Family Readiness Group's Telephone Tree is the quickest way to get answers and information.

As a Point of contact, you are assigned 6 to 8 families to call once every 2 weeks, or when official information is received about our soldiers. You give out official information, supply helpful phone numbers, and help squash rumors. You send questions and issues up the "chain of concern" to the Rear Detachment Commander and the unit Commander and you follow up with your families to make sure their issues and concerns are being addressed.

Point of Contact volunteers have advantages: they stay "in the loop", they stay involved, and they get the satisfaction of helping other families.

If you get a "kick" out of doing something important and you want to be a "branch" in the "tree", email m158.phonetree@us.army.mil or call (877) 620-4187 or (817) 735-9732.



Point of contact volunteers have advantages

The Challengers

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Sponsorship: Vacant

Historian: Vacant

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Major, U.S. Army
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Resources and Contacts

Contact a Family Readiness Group member if you have questions or need information.

Write your FRG contact name here: _____

For additional assistance, contact the unit resources below.

Home Detachment Commander:	MSG Wesley	(254) 287-6416
Personnel Specialist:	Mr. Schrader	(254) 287-8590
Unit Administrator:	Ms. Heather Rivera	(254) 287-8325
Home Detachment Fax Number:		(254) 287-8339

TRICARE Information:	(800) 406-2832
Dental-United Concordia:	(800) 866-8499
Army One Source (www.armyonesource.com):	(800) 464-8107

**** Remember: Pay issues MUST be initiated by the soldier. ****

Internet Resources

Family Readiness
<http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/>

Deployment Connections
<http://www.deploymentconnections.org>

From the Editor

Let us know how we can make the newsletter more useful to you! Send newsletter contributions, suggestions, and comments to:
M158.frgnewsletter@us.army.mil

Due to the concern for our soldiers' security, the Challengers newsletter can be sent electronically to official military email accounts only. You may register for an official AKO guest account at www.us.army.mil. You must have the AKO User name of your sponsor. AKO includes a comprehensive help guide and tutorial to allow you to personalize your AKO portal.